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ABSTRACT

The practicum reported here addressed the difficulty some newly-immigrated Spanish-speaking, limited-English-proficient high school students experience in adjusting to a new culture, putting them at risk of dropping out of school. A program was designed for this population in a suburban high school with a substantial and increasing immigrant population. Program components included initial screening and interviews, four English classes, including a new one in conversational English, a small-group acculturation counseling program, and parent orientation workshops concerning the school system. Results of this intervention were positive for 33 of the 35 participating students; two dropped out of school. The majority of participants felt that the new conversational English course was valuable, and the counseling sessions helped students adjust to the new culture, community, and school more readily and deal with problems more effectively. Appendices include: preliminary ESL/bilingual survey (English and Spanish versions); preliminary teacher interview; follow-up ESL/bilingual survey (English and Spanish); family interviews; parent night flyers A&B (Spanish and English); 10 most-asked questions and answers; and parent-night evaluations (Spanish and English). (Author/MSE)

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ED 389 213

A Comprehensive Dropout-Prevention Program To Increase the Number of Spanish-Speaking ESL Students Remaining in High School

by

Diana Galletta-Bruno

Cluster 53

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A Practicum II Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
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for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Practicum Approval Sheet

This practicum took place as described

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This practicum report was submitted by Diana Galletta Bruno under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

Date of Final Approval of Report

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Advisor

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ABSTRACT

A Comprehensive Dropout-Prevention Program to Increase the Number of Spanish-speaking ESL Students Remaining in High School. Galletta-Bruno, Diana, 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies.

This practicum addressed the difficulty some Spanish-speaking ESL/LEP students experience transitioning into a new country/culture/school. Because of the many difficulties they encounter, this population was at high risk of dropping out of school.

This implementation program focused on the newly arrived Spanish-speaking students who had few, if any, English skills. The program included (a) initial screening and interviews, (b) four English classes, including a new conversational English class, (c) a small-group acculturation counseling program, headed by the bilingual writer and the ESL Counselor, that provided students with guidance in dealing with the new culture, community, and school, and that also gave the students an opportunity to interact with other newly arrived Spanish-speaking students, and (d) parent orientations/workshops explaining how the school system worked.

Results of the intervention were positive for 33 of 35 students who took part in the intervention. Only two students dropped out of school. Evaluations carried out by the writer indicated that (a) the majority of the students felt that the added English course was valuable and (b) that the counseling sessions helped the students not only adjust to their new culture, community, and school more readily, but also deal with difficulties more effectively.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The community in which the writer works is a suburban city of approximately 66,000 and lies within commuting range of five of the Northeast's largest cities. Over the last 30 years the community has developed a strong diversified economic base. Because of the community's plentiful array of employment opportunities (corporate, high tech, manufacturing, and service), it attracts people from all over the world and counts within its citizenry people from all educational and income groups.

As a result of the community's strong, stable economy and its population diversity, the city has become the provider of all the primary social services for the region, thus attracting more people from outside the area. The community demographic data and trends indicate a large increase in the Hispanic and Asian populations. The census statistics gathered in 1970, 1980, and 1990 show that the Hispanic population in the community has grown from 935 in 1970 to 5,045 in 1990. Similarly, the Asian and Pacific population has increased from 601 in 1980 to 2,582 in 1990. The community also has large Portuguese, Middle Eastern, and

African American populations. Although the Caucasian population is the largest group, all the city's public schools, including the high school, wonderfully reflect the multi-ethnic diversity of the community.

The community high school has recently been reorganized from a grade 10 through 12 high school to a grade 9 through 12 high school. There are approximately 2,300 students in attendance, making it one of the largest high schools in the state. The school's diverse student body represents a variety of races, nationalities, cultural backgrounds, and income levels. According to school records, 21.4% of the high school students in attendance during the 1992-93 school year were from non-English speaking homes. The data suggest that the English as a second language population will continue to increase, with a proportional impact on the high school. A total of 70 new Limited English Proficient (LEP) students entered the high school from September 1993 through June 1994.

As in many urban schools, the skill diversity of the students attending the community high school is wide. The school attempts to provide for the varying needs of the student population with a large variety of courses offered on different levels. Along with offering special education classes, the school employs a support staff that includes two psychologists, two crisis counselors, nine guidance

counselors, and two social workers.

So that the school might present a smaller, more personal feel, it was divided into two schools within a single school building. Students and staff were randomly assigned to either one school or the other.

The combined school feels its major strengths are its staff, the diversity of its student body, and the many programs the school offers to meet the needs of the students.

Ironically, while the largeness of the school allows for the wide variety of courses offered, its large size is also one of its major weaknesses. Many feel there are simply too many students in one building.

The student population of the school directly affects the number of students assigned to each guidance counselor; the more students there are in the school, the more students there are assigned to each counselor. Because of the changeover from a grade 10 through 12 school to a grade 9 through 12 school, there were two groups of transitioning students, and the number of students assigned to each counselor had grown tremendously. Because of this enormous growth, the number of personal contacts the counselors have with each student assigned to them is severely limited. As a result, the counselors have little time for their many important duties, including counseling new students who are

having trouble with the transition from (a) middle school to high school, (b) another school district, and/or (c) another country.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer works in the community high school as a bilingual school psychologist and is assigned to one of the schools within a school. The duties of the psychologist at the high school include the following throughout the year: (a) Consulting with teachers, parents and outside personnel; (b) counseling with students on an individual basis; (c) conducting psychological evaluations of identified and referred students with possible intellectual, learning and/or social-emotional difficulties; (d) attending Planning and Placement Team meetings on students who were evaluated; (e) participating in the development of Individual Educational Plans for the students evaluated; (f) helping to respond to crises in the school, such as students who are fighting, students who are victims of sexual or physical abuse, students who are pregnant, students who are suicidal, and students and staff who have experienced a death of a fellow student or teacher; and (g) coordinating services for students through the Department of Children and Youth Services, the local hospital, and/or various community agencies if necessary; and (h) attending to administrative

functions, such as supervising School Psychologist Interns, coordinating information from outside agencies, and/or monitoring the progress of certain students through the Child Study Team which meets twice a week.

Chapter II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The education of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in Bilingual and English as a Second Language programs had come a long way in this country mainly due to some major legal decisions involving the education of LEP students. The information gathered by reviewing some of the major court cases involving education in this area (Pub. Law 88-352, title VI, the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974; Lau v. Nichols U.S. Supreme Court; Rio v. Read, 73 F.R.D. 589, Cintron v. Brentwood Union Free School District; Casteneda v. Pickard) affirmed that local school district officials were responsible for providing an appropriate program for LEP students. These decisions meant that the school systems must take affirmative steps to remediate the English language deficiencies or develop the English language skills of LEP students so that these students could participate in and benefit from the school system's regular education program. Additionally, the school system must have in place appropriate methods for diagnosing the proficiency level of new LEP students, and school systems must develop and

implement appropriate instructional programs, or provide appropriate special services, for LEP students. According to the decisions, these services are to be based on recent research and pedagogy in the fields of English as a Second Language and Bilingual Education. Further, the school system must ensure that LEP students have equal access to ancillary programs, such as gifted programs and/or special education services. Finally, the school system must have available documentation of the appropriate LEP educational services that the school system provides. If a school system fails to provide an appropriate educational program for LEP students, the system is denying equal access to education for those students.

Although the writer's school system was providing bilingual and ESL programs that appeared to be appropriate, an area of concern at the high school was the dropout rate of LEP students. From 1987 through 1992, the dropout rate (as reported to the state) for grades 9 through 12 in the writer's school system averaged 7.4% per year. The public school district's racial/ethnic make-up was 9% Asian, 13.0% Hispanic, 11.3% African American, 0.3% Native American, and 66.5% white. The ESL/Bilingual drop outs accounted for 11% of the total dropouts for the 1987-1992 period. All of these ESL/Bilingual students had been serviced by the school system's ESL/Bilingual program at some point during their

school career. Further review of the school district's total dropout data indicated that the greatest number of students who transferred into the school system and later dropped out of school had entered during grades 9 through 12; a majority of those same students was from a racial or linguistic minority.

In general, the entire community, and more specifically, the Hispanic community association, continually placed pressure on the school system to improve the Bilingual/ESL program. Two years previous to this implementation, in response to the Hispanic community's pressure, the high school added an ESL counselor to assist Hispanic students at the high school. However, more than just the addition of a counselor was needed as the high LEP-student dropout rate was still a concern to many members of the high school staff and the community in general.

Problem Documentation

Evidence to support the existence of the problem included the following:

1. The dropout data collected at the high school revealed that 18 out of approximately 120 students in the ESL/Bilingual program dropped out of school from September of 1993 through June of 1994.
2. Fifteen of the 18 total LEP student dropouts were

Hispanic; 2 of the 18 LEP student dropouts were Portuguese; 1 of the 18 LEP student dropouts was Asian.

In addition, a preliminary ESL/Bilingual survey (see Appendix A) was administered to 45 ESL/Bilingual high school students in June of 1994. The survey was designed to reveal the students' perceptions concerning strengths and weaknesses of their academic program and their school community in general. The following results (see Table 1, page 10) also support the existence of the problem:

Table 1

Results from Preliminary ESL/Bilingual Survey

Number of students surveyed was 45. Some students did not respond to all questions.

QUESTION NUMBER	RESPONSES ACCORDING TO SCALE			
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The Bilingual classes I am taking are teaching me what I expected.	5	11	14	14
2. I understand the information taught in my Bilingual Civics class.	5	6	14	17
3. I understand the information taught in my Bilingual Biology class.	1	8	16	13
4. I understand the information taught in my Bilingual Math class.	3	5	13	16
5. The ESL classes I am taking are teaching me what I expected.	4	9	11	21
6. I feel that the way English is taught in my ESL classes is helping me learn English quickly.	4	11	9	18
7. I think we should have more conversational English and Language Arts English classes.	2	2	3	37
8. No one helped me to learn about the school when I first came to the high school.	7	8	20	10
9. Adjusting to the new school is easier if someone is able to help you learn about the new culture/new environment.	0	6	6	32
10. Having someone help me identify what career path might be best for me is necessary.	5	1	4	33
11. More career information is needed to help me plan for post-high school.	0	2	8	31
12. Many Bilingual/ESL students participate in school-sponsored activities, such as after school clubs.	6	13	15	11
13. I feel more activities should be provided for the Bilingual/ESL students so that they can feel more a part of the school community.	1	0	6	36

As seen in Table 1, overall, the majority of the students were satisfied with their ESL and Bilingual

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classes. However, the majority of the respondents also felt strongly in question 7 that more conversational English and Language Arts classes were needed. The majority also indicated in questions 8 and 9 that no one helped them adjust to the new school environment/culture. In addition, the majority felt more should be done regarding career planning. Finally, most of the students responding to question 13 felt more activities should be provided for the ESL/Bilingual students so that they could feel more a part of the school community.

In June of 1994 a Preliminary Staff Interview (see Appendix B) was given to 15 ESL/Bilingual teachers, the ESL counselor, the learning disabilities teachers, and the reading specialist. The staff interview was designed to reveal concerns regarding Bilingual and ESL classes. The interview also provided the staff members an opportunity to give suggestions on what could be done to improve the educational programs for the school's Bilingual/ESL students. The results were as follows:

1. Thirteen of the 15 staff who were interviewed responded that there were (a) not enough materials and textbooks, and (b) too many students at different levels in one class.
2. Fourteen staff members felt that students were placed in content area ESL classes without much

assistance, especially since the students lacked English proficiency.

3. Six staff members discussed the fact that not enough classes were offered in the different areas such as math, science, social studies, and conversational English.
4. All the interviews revealed in one manner or another that not enough was being done to meet the needs of the Bilingual/ESL students. One teacher wrote that there were not enough classes to meet the needs and interests of the students; this resulted in loss of student interest and eventually led to students dropping out. The same teacher also commented that six students dropped out in 1994 because there were not enough classes to meet their needs.

Causative Analysis

This writer felt that some of the major contributors to the problem presented in this paper were as follows:

1. There was insufficient information on the academic levels of the students who were entering school from another country. In order to appropriately place students and measure the students' progress, the school should have evaluated ESL students in a

more standardized manner.

2. There was a lack of acculturation counseling for the students entering a new culture.
3. There were insufficient conversational English classes for newly arrived LEP students; students did not have enough opportunities to practice their English and thereby hasten their English language acquisition. This was indicated by 40 out of 45 LEP students surveyed in their Bilingual classes (See Table 1 for results of the Preliminary ESL/Bilingual Survey).
4. There was little participation by LEP students in extracurricular activities as indicated by 26 out of 45 LEP students surveyed. Forty-two out of the 45 students also indicated that more activities were needed for LEP students so that they could feel more a part of the school community.
5. There was insufficient assistance given new students with the acculturation process. Thirty out of the 45 LEP students surveyed indicated that no one helped them learn about the new school and the new culture.
6. There were not enough classes at the students' levels to maintain the students' interest.
7. Interviews (see Appendix B) conducted by the

writer with staff revealed concerns in the areas of assessment of ability levels, class placement of LEP students, and the lack of a variety of Bilingual courses to keep students interested.

8. LEP students assigned to a study hall period were doing nothing and were wasting quality time that could be used to build listening and conversational English skills.
9. There was insufficient parent/teacher involvement.
10. There was insufficient career planning for ESL students to connect course work with future career plans/interests.
11. Too often, ESL students with very serious disabilities were left to fail for two or three years in ESL/Bilingual programs. The students were new to the country, and therefore, often got frustrated and bored in their classes, and this caused them to drop-out of school.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of the literature showed that dropping out of school appeared to be more common among students who were not English speaking. Researchers (Bishopp, 1987; Careaga, 1988; Finn, 1989; Jason et. al., 1992; McCormick, 1989; Rumberger, 1987; Steinberg, Blinde and Chan, 1982; Velez,

1989) identified several characteristics, such as poor grades, a high rate of absences, a poor sense of belonging to the school community, poor self-esteem, and disciplinary difficulties/confrontations, of students who were at risk of dropping out of school. Velez (1989) pointed out that students who had been suspended from school had higher odds of dropping out. Velez's research showed that negative behavior and school sanctions contributed greatly to the ultimate decision to drop out by the Hispanic-student subgroups (Cuban, Chicano and Puerto Rican) that he studied.

In addition to the above mentioned general at-risk factors, Gingras and Careaga (1989), McCormick, Steinberg et al., and Velez suggested that there were several other factors, such as the student's level of English proficiency, the peer group in which the student associates, personal family hardships, the size of the school, the location of the school, the level of acculturation, and the amount of community/family support the student receives when he/she enters the new environment, that appear to increase the risk of LEP students dropping out of school. According to researchers (Finn; Rumberger; Steinberg et al.) correlations between the above mentioned factors with dropping out of school were very high.

The process of acculturation varies among the different groups migrating to the United States. Some of the factors

that influence acculturation are the length of time the person has been in the new country, the proximity to the person's traditional culture, the age of the person migrating, the birthplace of the person migrating, and the gender of the person migrating (Harry, 1992). Harry described acculturation as, "A process of modifying one's original 'belief, styles of being and adapting' to those of another culture" (1992, p.13). The individual attempts to incorporate his/her home culture with that of the new one (Zuniga, 1992). Zuniga found the following about acculturation:

> "It involves the conflict-ridden, decision-making process in which the immigrant trades off his or her indigenous attitudes, values, and behaviors for those of the host group, until she or he achieves a mixture of old and new that is deemed optimal" (p. 158).

The acculturation process may vary between individuals. For example, younger individuals have a tendency to integrate into the new culture much more easily than older individuals, especially if the individuals are in school. This age-sensitive acculturation could result in uneven acculturation levels among family members and could sometimes cause disagreements within families (Harry; Inclan and Herron, 1989; Zuniga). Overall, the more similar the previous culture is to the new culture, the easier it

becomes to integrate.

The other important factor mentioned above was English proficiency. Applebome (1987) stated, "Studies show that more than 40 percent of Hispanic students drop out before high school and that a lack of proficiency in English is one of the reasons students become frustrated" (p.22). Steinberg et al. suggested that the strongest factors that contribute to greater school dropout among LEP students were (a) early academic failure, (b) more negative interaction with teachers and school personnel, and (c) lack of a fit between LEP student needs and school programs.

Velez (1989) added to this list a few more factors, such as (a) accelerated role taking, including the accelerated taking of adult roles, which may lead to a lessened commitment to educational goals; (b) heavy involvement with the opposite sex, which may lead to pregnancy which may lead to dropping out of school. (Cuban, Chicano, and Puerto Rican females are more likely to drop out); (c) family gender role arrangements and family structure (living with two parents) that have a significant impact on the probability of dropping out for all groups; (d) the higher odds that an older student who is held back because of language difficulties, academic failure, and/or change of school, will drop out of school; (e) sociopsychological factors, such as a student's education

goals/aspirations, or lack thereof, which can hinder or encourage the continuation of school; and (f) immigrant status, as recent immigrants among Chicano and Puerto Rican students are more likely to drop out because some had spent a portion of their educational lives in less developed educational systems or rural communities, and therefore have language difficulties which prevented successful transitions.

Many poor Hispanic families who had immigrated from rural areas and urban slums were limited by lack of education and training. Middle class families from metropolitan area exhibited fewer difficulties because they were better educated and had marketable skills (Garcia-Preto, 1982). The more affluent the immigrant family was, the better the transition and the less likely students from that family were to drop out (Velez, 1989).

Psychological and social adaptation with respect to perceived immigrant status in the new culture was documented in several studies (Harry, 1992; Ogbu, 1987; Retish and Kavanaugh, 1992; Velez, 1989). An individual immigrating from a country that was subordinate to the new country, often tended to internalize the lower status and then tended to demonstrate a similar pattern in the new culture, a status pattern that could also negatively affect school performance, lessen the parent involvement with the school,

and increase the dropout risk (Harry; Velez). Most important, it was not prudent to look for just one factor as the cause for an ESL student deciding to leave school early; one had to look for a variety of factors that interact to influence that decision (Steinberg et al.).

School systems and individual schools were quite varied in how they addressed the transitional needs of new students, especially the needs of those students who arrived from other countries and had varying abilities and differing motivations. Relocation/transition into a new culture could be viewed as a crisis situation. Most often adolescents when placed in a new setting encounter many challenges which could be exacerbated if their relocation involved a recent arrival into a new culture (Cardenas, Taylor, and Adelman, 1993). When transitioning into a new culture, the student faces a host of perplexing challenges, such as learning a new language, learning about a new environment, making new friends, making a telephone call, ordering lunch, and finding a new classroom, to name but a few; these are all the new stressors that drained away the student's reservoir of coping ability (Gordon, 1978). Failure to cope effectively with the many changes encountered in the new culture could result in learning and/or behavioral difficulties. Some students during transitionings, such as from one culture to another, experience feelings of anxiety,

confusion, insecurity, depression, and frustration, all of which can lead to a life crisis (Cardenas, Taylor and Adelman, 1993; Ingraham, 1985; Gordon; Jason et. al., 1992).

Another reason moves could be "emotionally hazardous" for adolescents was because the adolescents were often not involved in the decision to move, and this gave the adolescent a feeling of lack of control, which in turn, could cause a variety of problems (Berg-Cross and Flanagan, 1988, p. 312). In the new environment, the student may find him/herself socially constricted and unable to use previous experiences to ease his or her adjustment (Berg-Cross and Flanagan).

As mentioned previously, multiple stressors in a student's life increased the incidence of failure in school (Cardenas, Taylor and Adelman; Jason et. al.). A student's ability to cope with changes involved in transitions also depended on his/her coping resources, maturity, and support systems (Crockett, Petersen, Graber, Schulenberg, and Ebata, 1989; McGoldrick, 1982).

The intensity of the impact of and the adjustment to the new environment also varied depending on a number of factors, such as how recently the family resettled in the new culture, the ethnicity and social composition of the family's new community, the family members' individual preparation for resettlement, the family members'

pre-immigration experiences, and their "personal adjustment prior to the full impact of the acculturation process" (Koss-Chioino and Vargas, 1992. p. 11). As mentioned previously, the more similar the new culture was in such areas as values, beliefs, perceptions, and behavioral norms, the easier the transition for the newcomer (de Anda, 1984).

"Problems that arise in relation to acculturation efforts often are exacerbated by pre-immigration problems and common problems of minors. These problems manifest themselves in poor school attendance and performance, somatic complaints, negative affect, and misbehavior" (Cardenas, Taylor, and Adelman, 1993 p. 204). The level of acculturation was related to the possible problems that some Hispanic students and their families had encountered and was also related to variables such as level of stress and dropping out of school (Ponterotto, 1987; Velez, 1989).

Other cultural groups had similar challenges to face. Sanders (1987), pointed out that when students confront incompatibility between their culture's value system and that of the new culture, the conflict could result in alienation, poor self-image, and withdrawal. "Low self-esteem, directly related to group identity, is the major cause of the low achievement records of American Indian students" (Sanders, p. 82).

Other investigators discussed the fact that students

sometimes fall into vicious cycles that resulted in poor school adjustment. Finn (1989) spoke to the cycle in which the student who did not feel connected with his/her school and did not maintain some form of attachment with the school through participation in some extracurricular activities, student group, teachers, etc. These students sometimes developed high absences and/or eventually dropped out of school. Lacking a sense of attachment, some students felt alienated from their school and also felt that no one (school staff) cared about them (Finn; Newman, 1981; Velez, 1989). Velez's study of Hispanic students indicated that participation in extracurricular activities played somewhat of a role in reducing the dropout rate for Chicanos and Puerto Rican students through involvement in social life of the school. The more involved students were in school community, the less likely they were to be absent from school. The direct correlation with high absences/chronic truancy and dropping out of school was well documented in the literature (Canales and Bush, 1992; Finn, 1989; Rumberger, 1987; Words & Numbers, 1991).

Good identification of students at risk of dropping out of school could be a major step in the prevention process; indirect evidence suggested LEP students were especially at risk (Gingras and Careaga, 1989). Steinberg et al. pointed out that LEP student drop out at a rate 40% compared to 10%

in primarily English speaking homes. Of the LEP dropout rates, the Hispanic dropout count was the highest of any ethnic group (Baruth and Manning, 1992; Costantino, Malgady, and Rogler, 1988; Gingras and Careaga; Steinberg et al., 1982). Another investigator (Applebome, 1987) reported the Hispanic dropout rate to be within the 45% to 52% range.

The New York school system reported a high rate of incidence of psychological symptoms among LEP students. These symptoms included behavior disturbances, hyperactivity, and adjustment reactions with anxious and depressive features; the symptoms appeared to be related to the stress induced by acculturation as an etiological factor (Costantino, Malgady, and Rogler; Malgady, Rogler, and Costantino, 1987).

Another factor that placed many of these students at risk was the complication that many of these students lived in poverty and/or had a high rate of residential mobility, which may have also negatively impacted their development/ adjustment to school and increased their probability of dropping out of school (Gingras and Careaga, 1989; Rogers, 1993; Steinberg et al.; Velez, 1989). According to Baruth and Manning (1992), "A total of 39% of Hispanic Americans under the age of 16 lived below the poverty level in 1989; of these, 53% reside in the Northeast and 44% resided in the South, and the Midwest and West averaged approximately one

third each" (p. 114).

In summary, there were a tremendous number of factors, such as the English proficiency, level of acculturation, immigrant status, poverty level, the receiving school's reaction to transitioning student's needs, the value system of the family, and the level of family/friends support, all affecting how the student would achieve in school. Overall, it was important to remember that students entering the school from another culture may not only have been reacting to a new environment in a culture-shock state, but may also have been reacting according to values regarding school, work, and relationships that were internalized from another culture (Harry; Ponterotto, 1987; Steinberg et al.; Velez). Schools had to become aware of this fact if the dropout rates among LEP students were to improve.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

As mentioned in Chapter II of this paper, there was a large number of LEP students who dropped out of school. In particular, the majority of the dropouts were Hispanic. The goal of this practicum was to increase the number of Hispanic students in the Bilingual/ESL program who chose to remain in high school.

Expected Outcomes

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum:

1. The primary outcome was that the LEP student dropout statistics gathered at the end of the practicum would show that no more than 7 of the approximately 50 Hispanic students involved in the intervention program had dropped out of school. (The number of students in the intervention program could be different at the end of the intervention depending on how many new ESL students enrolled in the school during the year.)
2. The secondary outcomes of this practicum were (a) when asked to complete an end of practicum Follow-

Up ESL/Bilingual Survey (see Appendix C), at least 25 of the approximately 50 students in the practicum intervention program would indicate satisfaction with the number of English classes provided; (b) as measured by a positive response on the Follow-Up ESL/Bilingual Survey (see Appendix C) to be administered at the completion of the practicum intervention program, at least 25 of the approximately 50 students in the intervention program would take part in at least one extracurricular activity; and (c) when responding to question number 8 on the Follow-Up ESL/Bilingual Survey, at least 25 of the approximately 50 students in the practicum intervention program would indicate a response of "strongly disagree" or "somewhat disagree."

Measurement of Outcomes

The measurement of outcomes would be achieved through the writer monitoring the high school's ESL/Bilingual dropout list for the names of the students in the intervention program. In addition, the Follow-Up ESL/Bilingual Survey (see Appendix C) was to be used to determine achievement of the secondary outcomes 2(a), 2(b), and 2(c) mentioned in the previous section.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The solutions from the review of the literature were varied and suggest numerous possible approaches that could be effective in preventing LEP students from dropping out of high school.

Several investigators recommended that much of the focus should be placed on studying the dropout problem as a process which included a set of variables that could negatively interact and influence the student to decide to drop out of school (Finn, 1989; Steinberg, et al. 1982). The emphasis should be on "person-environment interaction" focusing on a "broader ecology in which the student lives" (Steinberg, et al., p. 57). Additionally, it was important to study the "push out" and "holding" factors in the school as they pertained to LEP; the school had to be seen as part of the problem and part of the solution. The school had to review its policies, such as suspension, to accommodate at-risk students and provide a more conducive environment that would provide for a more academically and emotionally rewarding school experience (Finn, 1989; Newman, 1981; Steinberg, et al., p. 57; Velez, 1989).

Identification of students who might be at risk of failing and/or becoming disengaged from school because of daily strains due to role conflict or other daily stressors was needed (Gingras & Careaga, 1989; Jason, et al., 1992; Rumberger, 1987; Words & Numbers, 1991). Additional support for students in the academics and social-emotional areas had to be provided (Gingras and Careaga; Jason, et al. 1992). Also, there had to be increased focus on assisting newly arrived LEP students in their transitions into the school community and home community (Cardenas, Taylor, and Adelman, 1993; de Anda, 1984; Harry, 1992; Sue and Sue, 1990; Sue and Zane, 1987).

LEP students shared many factors with other at-risk students; however, additional English language skills could be an important dropout-prevention measure for LEP students, especially at the high school level (Gingras and Careaga). Activities that made LEP students feel involved and connected with the school should be provided (Berg-Cross and Flanagan; Gingras and Careaga; Finn, 1989; Words & Numbers, 1991). The schools should provide activities and opportunities for teachers to engage in in-service activities that would focus on increased understanding of cultural differences and acculturation difficulties. The increased understanding on the part of the teachers should be combined with interventions that change the classroom

environment to meet some of the additional needs of LEP students. As past negative experiences could negatively affect interactions with culturally diverse students and their families (Baruth and Manning, 1992; Canales, 1992; Harry, 1992; Perez and Torres-Guzman, 1992; Richard-Amato and Snow, 1992; Zuniga, 1992), teachers should also include an examination of the students' experiences with diversity. Programs, such as "Partner for Valued Youth" should be implemented. This type of at-risk intervention program would encourage LEP students to stay in school and to set broader goals for themselves through a cross-age tutoring (Robledo, 1990). Additionally, schools should provide programs that involve LEP students in job training, career education, and career shadowing (Gingras and Careaga; Rumberger, 1987). In particular, schools should provide the LEP student with mentors who share similar cultural backgrounds and who can help the student through difficult experiences in the new culture (Cardenas, Taylor, and Adelman, 1993; Sanders, 1987). Ethnic identity is extremely important for students, as researchers (Phinney and Alipuria, 1990; Phinney and Chavira, 1992; Ruben, 1989, Ruiz, 1990) have pointed out; there is an increasing relationship between self-esteem and ethnic identity. Since potential dropouts typically have low self-esteem and/or are often experiencing school and/or home difficulties (Canales

and Bush, 1992; Gingras and Careaga; McGoldrick, Pearce and Giordano, 1982; Merta, Stringham, and Ponterotto, 1988; Ruiz, 1990; Sue and Sue, 1990; Koss-Chino and Vargas), LEP students should be provided opportunities for counseling, such as personal counseling with a culturally skilled counselor, acculturation counseling, peer counseling, teacher counseling, and/or parent counseling. Transitional programs had helped many LEP students. "Bicultural Groups," group discussions facilitated by using basic group therapy, have dealt with problems related to acculturation, problems such as not knowing how to cope with school and community, residual trauma from negative experiences encountered in the new culture, grief for what has been lost, fears, homesickness, and common adolescent problems, exacerbated by the immigrant status (Cardenas, Taylor, and Adelman, 1993). Ethnocultural identification was another successful counseling technique that has been used to facilitate coping with change in cultural values and transitional experiences (Ruiz, 1990).

The writer felt involving parents in students' schooling was extremely important for all students. Making parents feel comfortable with the school could increase the likelihood that their children would remain in school. Additionally, assessing parental beliefs and attitudes about school would give the school better information about which

students might be at risk of dropping out of school (Baruth and Manning, 1992; Gingras and Careaga; Steinberg, et al.; Zuniga, 1992).

In summary, knowledge of the very important factors that interfered with LEP students' adjustment to the new school and learning could assist schools to develop comprehensive programs that would prevent LEP students from leaving school before graduation.

Description of Selected Solution

The solution selected by the writer to address the ESL dropout problem was based upon (a) an integration of possible solutions, which were reviewed in the previous section, and (b)ideas generated from an analysis of the student surveys and teacher interviews. Many of the solutions suggested in the literature appeared to have relevance to the problem and the writer felt they could be combined for a more comprehensive approach in preventing LEP students from dropping out of school.

In this intervention to lessen the LEP dropout rate, the writer decided to employ a collaboration of the ESL/Bilingual high school teachers, the ESL/Bilingual counselor, the ESL/Bilingual coordinator, and the ESL/Bilingual Reception Center staff. The intervention program was designed to focus mainly on the Hispanic

students because they were (a) the largest ethnic group in the ESL/Bilingual program in this writer's high school and (b) the group that had the largest number of dropouts.

First, the writer reviewed with ESL/Bilingual staff and school administrators the information gathered through the student surveys, teacher interviews, and the literature review.

Second, the writer opted to use the following new screening process when new LEP high school students arrived at the high school and/or the reception center (a center that registered pre-school to high school level LEP students and was run by the school system):

1. The student would fill out an interest survey.
2. The student would fill out a self-esteem inventory.
3. A thorough family history and educational history would be gathered (see Appendix D).
4. Both the English and Spanish versions of the Woodcock-Muños Language Survey (1993) (which primarily measures cognitive-academic language proficiency) was to be administered individually to each new Spanish-speaking student in order to (a) classify the student's English and Spanish proficiency, (b) determine eligibility for bilingual services offered through the new

intervention program, (c) have a better understanding of student's language abilities, and (d) assess through standardized pre- and post-tests student growth in the new English class offered through the intervention program.

Third, in place of a normal high school study hall, all new Spanish-speaking students were to be placed in a newly formed ESL study period three times a week (during the other two periods each week, the Spanish-speaking students would have gym class). The new ESL study period would focus on the following:

1. During two of the three weekly periods, the students would spend time in a language lab concentrating on the English language skills that they were covering in the New Arrival Conversational English (NACE) class. The language lab would act to supplement to the NACE class, and students would use workbooks and audio tapes from The Multilingual Audio-Visual E.S.L. (Sesma, 1979), a multilingual foreign language program for Spanish-speaking students while they learn English. Since to facilitate understanding, these tapes and workbooks provide an immediate translation of English statements into Spanish, the ESL students would be able to use the audio

tapes and workbooks at their own pace and level. The Sesma series tapes and workbooks present information on three levels and, in addition to presenting the most common basic English constructions, contain approximately 2000 basic English vocabulary words that were used within the context of survival topics, such as classroom objects, school people, question words, clothing, measurement, distance, location, weekly activities, school subjects, school places, classroom instructions, accidents and sicknesses, city and government, sports, and idiomatic expressions.

2. During the remaining one weekly period, the students each would participate in a small-group counseling session designed to help the Spanish-speaking students adjust to the emotional and social stressors that accompanied entering a new culture and a large high school. As planned, the small-group counseling sessions would deal with (a) acculturation issues, (b) how the school system works (schedules, credits, etc.), (c) community resources available to the Spanish-speaking students and their families, (d) making good choices in the new environment, such as

choosing peer groups, etc., and (e) career planning. The small-group counseling sessions were to be held in 10-week segments covering all of the above mentioned topics. As Spanish-speaking students entered the school (since they would arrive throughout the year), they would be placed immediately into the ESL study period. Because the series of counseling sessions was to be repeated throughout the year, the ESL student counselor could monitor the topics each student needed to cover.

Fourth, all new Spanish-speaking/non-English-speaking students were to be placed in a New Arrival Conversational English for new arrivals (NACE) class, which meant each Spanish-speaking student would have four English language classes instead of three. The NACE class would meet five times a week and use a comprehension-based approach dealing with cultural and school behavior issues. Audio tapes were among the materials that accompanied the text New Arrival English (Yedlin and Linse, 1990) which would be used in the new Conversational English class.

Fifth, for the parents of the newly arrived students, at least two orientation seminars were to be held covering (a) how the school system determines credits, course requirements, etc., and (b) the community resources

available to them and their families.

Report of Action Taken

The following steps were taken in order to implement the comprehensive LEP program to prevent LEP students from dropping out of school:

1. The writer received administrative approval to solicit staff members to work in the intervention program.
2. In June 1994, the writer first described the proposed drop-out prevention program to the ESL coordinator, the ESL high school counselor, and the bilingual teacher and then enlisted their services to work with the writer.
3. During June, July, and August 1994, the writer met with the above-mentioned staff to research and order materials to fulfill the requirements for the new NACE course. The writer also discussed with them strategies to be used in the intervention program.
4. During the first week of school, September 1994, ESL/Bilingual staff and school administrators met with the writer to discuss the results of the student surveys and the teacher interviews, and the writer reviewed the intervention plan with the

ESL/Bilingual staff and school administrators.

5. At the start of the 1994-95 school year, as new Spanish-speaking students began to arrive at the ESL/Bilingual Reception Center and the high school, additional screening procedures (family histories, interest surveys, self-esteem inventories, and the Woodcock-Munos Language Screening tests) were implemented, which continued throughout the year. The Reception Center had parents complete the family interview forms (see Appendix D) along with other routine screening. However, because the Reception Center was overwhelmed registering children of all ages, the high school ended up administering the Woodcock-Muños Language Screening.

6. After the new students were screened, and if they knew only very little or no English, they were assigned to the NACE class. The screening process continued until there was no more room in the NACE class (approximately 30 students).

7. As the newly arrived Spanish-speaking ESL students entered the school, they were assigned to a counseling group (up to three groups ran at any given time throughout the school year) that met one day a week. The sessions were headed by the

writer and the ESL Counselor, who are both bilingual. (Originally, the writer had proposed that time for the counseling sessions would be taken from the students' study period. However, the students did not have a study period, so instead the students were excused once a week from their NACE class to attend their small-group counseling sessions. In order to make up for the students' absence from the NACE class, the NACE teacher allowed students to take home audio tapes that accompanied the text New Arrival English [Yedlin and Linse, 1990] used in the NACE class. The writer also made available for the students to take home The Multilingual Audio-Visual E.S.L. [Sesma, 1979] English language tapes. These two sets of tapes complemented what the students were covering in their NACE class, and many students took advantage of this opportunity. Once the students had completed their 15 counselling sessions, they returned full time to their NACE class.) The agenda for the small group counseling sessions, which were repeated every 15 weeks to accommodate new incoming students, included (a) during weeks one and two, introductions, warm-up exercises, discussions on the different stages of

the acculturation process, the introduction of Rhinesmith's Ten Stages of Adjustment (1975), and a wrap-up discussion on any topics the students were concerned about and any additional topics they wished to discuss during future meetings; (b) during weeks three and four a warm-up exercise, a discussion on how the school system works (schedules, credits, attendance policy, discipline policy, etc.), a discussion on how this school system differed from the students' previous school systems, a discussion on student responsibilities, and a wrap-up discussion about any personal concerns that the students had; (c) during weeks five and six, a discussion about making good choices regarding peers, gangs, violence, drugs, safety issues, etc., and a wrap-up discussion about any personal concerns the students had; (d) during week seven, a discussion on gender roles in this country and how gender roles differ from the student's country, a discussion about sexual harassment, etc., and a wrap-up discussion about any personal concerns the students had; (e) during weeks 8 through 12, each student completed a career interest survey, the Career Decision-Making System (CDM), Spanish edition (El Sistema

Harrington/O'Shea Para La Seleccion De Carreras Ocupaciones [SSOC], [1982]). During these sessions, the ESL counselor and the writer also used the Occupational Outlook Handbook (United States Department of Labor (1994)and the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Volumes I and II (United State Department of Labor, 1994). The students were guided through their selections of career interest areas. The school counselor also used the information to help the students select courses for the following school year; (f) during week 13, a discussion about the community resources available to the students and their families, a discussion about extracurricular activities, sports, clubs, etc., available within the school, and a wrap-up discussion about any personal concerns the students had; (g) during week 14, a wrap-up session, and an open discussion regarding any personal or group concerns and/or any additional topics that were brought up by the group to discuss; and (h) during week 15, a new 15-week cycle of small group counseling sessions began.

8. The writer set up parent orientations held evenings in the late fall of 1994 and in the early

spring of 1995. In order to publicize the event, the writer had flyers printed and distributed to the newly arrived Spanish-speaking students and their parents (see Appendix E). The parent groups were very successful as the ESL counselor and the writer encouraged the students to attend with their parents. The writer and the ESL counselor tried to make the orientations not only informative but festive. In many cases, the student's whole family attended. The writer and the ESL counselor asked the parents to bring to the meeting a favorite food from their country, and as a result, the parents brought to each orientation wonderful, tasty dishes which they shared, smorgasbord-style with all others in attendance. This helped everyone get a better chance to meet other families that had also recently arrived in America, and to develop a support system outside of the school. Approximately 25 people attended each session, and the writer gave to the parents a list of the 10 most commonly asked parent questions (see Appendix F). At the end of the orientation evening, the parents filled out a Parent Night Evaluation (see Appendix G). All the evaluations were positive

and gave the writer and ESL counselor ideas for future orientation topics.

9. In May, 1995, the writer evaluated the program by (a) totaling the number of students who participated in the intervention program and the number of students from the program who dropped out of school, and (b) administering to students who participated in the intervention the Follow-Up ESL/Bilingual Survey (see Appendix C).

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The writer works in a suburban city of approximately 66,000 that is within commuting range of five of the Northeast's largest cities. Because of the community's plentiful array of employment opportunities (corporate, high tech, manufacturing, and service), it attracts people from all over the world and counts within its citizenry people from all educational and income groups.

Recent demographic data show a large increase in the Hispanic and Asian populations. The census statistics gathered in 1970, 1980, and 1990 showed that the Hispanic population in the community has grown from 935 in 1970 to 5,045 in 1990. Similarly, the Asian and Pacific population has increased from 601 in 1980 to 2,582 in 1990. The community also has large Portuguese, Middle Eastern, and African American populations. Although the Caucasian population is the largest group, all the city's public schools, including the high school, wonderfully reflect the multi-ethnic diversity of the community.

The community high school contains grades 9 through 12 and has approximately 2,300 students, making it one of the

largest high schools in the state. According to school records, 21.4% of the high school students in attendance during the 1992-93 school year were from non-English speaking homes. Seventy Limited English Proficient (LEP) students entered the high school from September 1993 through June 1994.

Many of the Hispanic LEP students were dropping out of high school. The high school's dropout data revealed that during the 1993-94 school year 15 of the 18 LEP students who dropped out were Hispanic.

With the goal of decreasing the dropout rate of the Hispanic students in the bilingual/ESL program, the writer introduced a comprehensive intervention program that employed a collaboration of the writer and several high school staff members.

The main components of the intervention program included (a) a screening and information gathering process for the newly arrived Spanish-speaking high school students, (b) weekly participation of small-group counseling sessions designed to help the newly arrived Spanish-speaking students adjust to the emotional and social stressors that accompany entering a new culture and a large high school, (c) for the Spanish-speaking students the addition of a new conversational English class that focused on a comprehension-based approach dealing with cultural and

school behavior issues, and (d) orientation seminars for the parents of the newly arrived students.

The writer set one primary outcome and three secondary outcomes for the intervention. The projected outcomes were all achieved.

The primary projected outcome was that no more than 7 of the approximately 50 Spanish-speaking LEP students involved in the intervention would drop out of school. (The writer anticipated that the number of students in the intervention program could be greater or less than the originally estimated 50 students depending on the number of new Spanish-speaking ESL students enrolling during the school year.)

This outcome was met. There were 40 Spanish-speaking ESL students who enrolled in the high school from September 1994 through May 1995. Of the 40 students, 35 were part of the intervention, which included screening, small-group counseling, conversational English class, and parent orientation. Of the 35 students in the intervention, just two dropped out of school. One of the two dropouts left school to work in a restaurant, and the other, who was 19 years old, decided to return to his native country. Due to some scheduling difficulties, 5 of the original 40 Spanish-speaking ESL students could not be included in the intervention. Of those five students, two dropped out of

school.

The first of the projected secondary outcomes of the intervention was that 25 of the approximately 50 students in the intervention would, when asked to complete a follow-up survey (see Appendix C) at the end of the intervention, indicate satisfaction with the number of English classes they had been offered.

This outcome was met. According to the projected outcome, half of the students in the program would indicate satisfaction with the number of English classes. The actual result was that all of the students who were surveyed responded "agree" or "strongly agree" when asked if they were satisfied with the number of English classes (see Table 2, page 47).

Table 2

Results from Final ESL/Bilingual Survey

Number of students surveyed was 30.

QUESTION NUMBER	RESPONSES ACCORDING TO SCALE				
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. I enjoyed my English Conversation class this year.	0	0	6	24	
2. The new English Conversation class gave me more opportunities to speak English and learn English more quickly.	0	0	11	18	1
3. The ESL language lab study periods were helpful to me and gave me more opportunities to practice my English skills	Language Lab not Given				
4. The counseling group sessions helped me learn about my new environment.	1	0	2	26	1
5. The counseling group sessions helped me better deal with difficulties I encountered in my new culture.	0	1	4	24	1
6. The counseling group sessions helped me identify what career path might be best for me to learn more about.	0	0	1	28	1
7. I have taken part in at least one extracurricular school activity this year.	9	2	4	15	
8. No one helped me to learn about the school when I first came to the high school.	28	2	0	10	
9. Adjusting to the new school was easier because of the group counseling sessions.	0	0	1	28	1

The second of the projected secondary outcomes was that at least 25 of the approximately 50 students in the intervention would take part in at least one extracurricular activity. This was to be measured by a follow up ESL/bilingual survey (see Appendix C) at the conclusion of the intervention.

This outcome was also met, as over half of the students surveyed, 19 of 30 (35 in program, 2 dropped out, and 3 students moved to another school system), indicated that they had taken part in some after-school activity (see Table

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2). A helpful change was that this school year, the school provided students with both a wide array of after-school activities and transportation home.

The third of the projected secondary outcomes was that at least 25 of the approximately 50 students would indicate a "strongly disagree" or "somewhat disagree" response when asked in the ESL/bilingual follow-up survey (see Appendix C) if when they first entered school no one had helped them learn more about the school.

This outcome was also met. Every student surveyed (30 out of the 30) responded either "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (see Table 2). Each of the students also commented that he/she felt good about the fact that there were people at the school to help them. The students further commented that the small-group sessions also added a very helpful dimension to the same process.

Discussion

The results of the implementation showed that the projected outcomes were all attained and that there was a decrease in the number of dropouts for Spanish-speaking LEP students in the high school. The additional attention that the intervention gave the Spanish-speaking LEP students helped to reduce some of the stress that the students encountered as they entered a new culture and new environment. The small-group counseling sessions offered the students constant reassurance that they were not alone and that there were many other students experiencing similar concerns. The small-group sessions also reinforced the notion that there were people in the school who cared about what the incoming Spanish-speaking ESL students were experiencing and/or feeling. Because of the intervention, students learned quickly that the counseling groups provided

the students not only with added emotional support, but also an opportunity to forge lasting friendships.

The feedback from the students involved in the intervention was extremely positive. When they were facing problems or concerns, the students felt free to seek out the ESL counselor and the writer. The students reported that they were grateful to receive this kind of immediate attention, and they felt their levels of anxiety, stress, and frustration had been reduced because of the intervention. The students felt at ease within their counseling groups, and felt connected with others in their groups.

Beyond helping the students with their day-to-day problems, the counseling sessions also focused on the students' possible future career interests and goals. Every student in the intervention filled out a career interest survey, and 5 of the 15 small-group counseling sessions were devoted to discussions about career topics. Having counseled students for several years in the area of career choices, the writer felt that students who have received career counseling have a clearer idea of which courses will be valuable to them. Also, once students have an idea of the direction they would like to take, helping the students decide on which courses to take becomes much easier. Further, once a student has decided on a career track, the school staff can be more helpful to the students as far as finding the student a mentor from the business community and/or helping the student search for post-secondary educational opportunities. Finally, career choice activities can help to motivate students to stay in school and pursue their areas of interest. The intervention coincided very well with a schoolwide "Career Days" activity introduced this school year. "Career Days" was set up by a

committee from the school, and the effort brought students together with representative from 56 different areas, such as construction technology and design, the business and financial community, health and bioscience technology, manufacturing, and communications. Many of the Spanish-speaking ESL students enjoyed meeting with the different professionals and received insight into how to pursue various careers. "Career Days" helped to reinforce what the ESL students were covering in their counseling groups.

The counseling sessions also covered the importance of after-school activities. Fortunately, this year the school offered not only a wide array of after-school activities for all students, but also transportation home for any students who needed it. Since many of the Spanish-speaking students did not have transportation available, they would not have been able to be involved in after-school activities if the school had not made this transportation available to them.

Transportation was sometimes a problem not only for the Spanish-speaking students, but for their families as well. When the intervention's Parent Night orientation activities were offered in the late fall of 1994 and the early spring of 1995, the writer and the ESL counselor in some cases had to make arrangements to provide transportation for a few of the families. The Parent Night meetings provided parents and family members an opportunity to enjoy some food, music, and companionship, and the meetings also allowed the families an opportunity to learn more about the school, the school's programs, school credits, etc. At the meetings, the ESL counselor and the writer emphasized to the parents the importance of the parents having their children attend school every day. Further, the ESL counselor and the writer communicated the direct correlation between a high rate of absences to an increased dropout rate.

The intervention program spawned several spinoffs. The ESL counselor and the writer implemented a "Peer Helper System," in which Spanish-speaking ESL students who have gone through the counseling sessions were used as peer helpers for newly arrived Spanish-speaking ESL students. The peer helpers were often students who had a similar schedule to the newly arrived student. In this way the peer helpers could accompany the newly arrived students to class for a day or two. If the writer and the ESL counselor were unable to match up peer helpers with a similar schedule to newly arrived students, arrangements were made to have the peer helpers leave class a few minutes early to meet the newly arrived students and accompany them to the next class.

The initial screening that was implemented in the fall of 1994 helped identify the different interests of the Spanish-speaking ESL students, and it also helped identify any concerns, strengths, or weaknesses the students might have. In this way, the school, through counseling services, peer tutors, etc., helped the incoming students immediately instead of waiting several months as had been the rule. The immediacy of this process was responsible for heading off problems or frustrations that had in the past led to Spanish-speaking ESL students dropping out of school. The family interviews helped the school counselors, the school psychologist, and the teachers know more about the students they received; having school staff involved with the students allowed the staff to better plan for the students and also to encourage the students to pursue some areas of interest. For example, if a student wrote that he enjoyed playing soccer, the teacher/counselor/psychologist could encourage the student to try out for the soccer team.

The intervention screening proved invaluable in discovering that 19 of the 35 students participating in the

intervention scored below the seventh-grade level in the Spanish version of the Woodcock-Muñcs language screening. This suggested that the students had missed out on some basic-skills learning in their native country. The results indicated that modifications in the students' curriculum were needed to address these deficiencies, which if left unremediated, could lead to the students becoming dropouts because of frustration or lack of interest. The writer spoke to the ESL/bilingual coordinator regarding the need for a bilingual/ESL class to help students improve their basic skills. As a result of this conversation, the writer, the ESL counselor, and the bilingual/ESL coordinator are applying for a Title Seven grant to establish a "newcomers' cluster." The cluster would meet the needs of high school English language learners who come to the writer's high school with less than the equivalent of an eighth-grade education. Information gathered during this practicum will be used in the further development of the program and also to demonstrate the need for such a program.

During the intervention, the number of students in the conversational English class for the Spanish-speaking ESL students presented a problem. The instructor felt that even though all the students showed improvement in their English skills, more could have been accomplished if the class had been limited to just 15 students. During the period of the intervention nothing could be done to ameliorate this situation; however, the ESL/bilingual coordinator and the ESL counselor agreed to have two sessions of conversational English available for the next school year. If the number of incoming Spanish-speaking ESL students were to remain constant, there would be just 15 students in each of the sections.

Overall, the intervention emphasized intensive English

language learning, offered the newly arrived Spanish-speaking ESL students extensive orientation to the school and the community, provided those students with social/emotional support, and offered the students a positive school environment that was helpful for the majority of the students in the program. Only 2 of the 35 students in the intervention dropped out of school. All the students who remained in the program were, when surveyed, extremely positive about the new conversational English class, and the students felt that the counseling sessions helped them adjust to their new school and community.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this practicum and a discussion of those results with her colleagues, the writer recommends the following for anyone implementing a similar intervention.

1. There must be sufficient time set aside for planning. The staff who are going to handle the group counseling sessions and the instructors who will teach the conversational English for newly arrived ESL students need to meet at length to discuss and plan the program.
2. The conversational English class for new arrivals should have no more that 15 students. This allows for more individualized attention and puts an emphasis on learning and speaking English.
3. The acculturation counseling sessions should be expanded to include all new arrival students, not just ESL students who are in the conversational English class.
4. An intervention program such as this should be explored as a viable approach at all grade levels,

or at least within the middle and high schools. At the middle schools, this type of intervention could be initiated through an in-service presentation to counselors and ESL/bilingual teachers.

5. If possible, schools initiating an intervention should explore the possibility of providing transportation for ESL students who want to be involved in after-school activities. Schools should also see about providing transportation for parents and families who wish to attend evening orientation meetings concerning ESL students.
6. Parent outreach programs and school involvement is essential to any intervention such as this. Staff should seek interpreters to facilitate communication between the school and the parents.
7. Students come with varied skills and needs. Therefore, a complete effort should be made to assess the students' educational histories and their individual skill levels. This will help schools to individualize the programs offered to their ESL students. At the same time the assessments can aid in the schools' providing their ESL students with appropriate peer tutors/mentors.
8. Schools should seek career mentors from a pool of past LEP students to help the new ESL students investigate further their areas of career interests.
9. Schools should encourage the development of cultural programs that link students to their heritage, and schools should also provide extra-curricular activities which will involve the new

ESL students with the general student body.

10. To help in the transitioning process, schools should produce in several languages orientation videos about the school. These videos should be made available to all new ESL students and their parents.

Dissemination

As many teachers and school board members have requested information about the intervention, the writer will disseminate copies of this practicum to her school administration and school board members.

Additionally, the writer plans to produce a manual that details the intervention. Included in the manual will be explanations of the content and methods used in the implementation. There will be lists of topics to be covered, materials, suggested questions and methods, as well as guidelines for success.

The writer also plans to share the information on the intervention with several professionals in neighboring school districts. These professional educators have experienced an increase in the number of LEP students in their schools and first expressed interest in the project after seeing the intervention featured in a local newspaper.

Additionally, the results of this practicum will be submitted for inclusion in a mini-workshop presentation at the next convention of the National Association of School Psychologists. Finally, the writer plans to submit the results of the practicum for inclusion in the newsletter of the writer's state school psychologists association.

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APPENDIX A

PRELIMINARY ESL/BILINGUAL SURVEY
ENGLISH AND SPANISH VERSIONS

PRELIMINARY ESL/BILINGUAL SURVEY

1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree			Strongly agree

On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), please indicate your belief with respect to the following statements. Write the number in the spaces provided and write any comments you have regarding the question in the space provided.

1. _____ The Bilingual classes I am taking are teaching me what I expected.

Comment: _____

_____

2. _____ I understand the information taught in my Bilingual Civics class.

Comment: _____

_____

3. _____ I understand the information taught in my Bilingual Biology class.

Comment: _____

_____

4. _____ I understand the information taught in my Bilingual Math class.

Comment: _____

_____

5. _____ The ESL classes I am taking are teaching me what I expected.

Comment: _____

_____

6. _____ I feel that the way English is taught in my ESL classes is helping me learn English quickly.

Comment: _____

_____

7. _____ I think we should have more conversational English and Language Arts English classes.

Comment: _____

_____

8. _____ No one helped me to learn about the school when I first came to the high school.

Comment: _____

_____

9. _____ Adjusting to the new school is easier if someone is able to help you learn about the new culture/new environment.

Comment: _____

_____

10. _____ Having someone help me identify what career path might be best for me is necessary.

Comment: _____

_____

11. _____ More career information is needed to help me plan for post high school.

Comment: _____

_____

12. _____ Many Bilingual/ESL students participate in school sponsored activities such as after school clubs.

Comment: _____

_____

13. _____ I feel more activities should be provided for the Bilingual/ESL students so that they can feel more a part of the school community.

Comment: _____

_____

Please answer the following questions:

1. Up to what grade did you study in your country?

2. What is the best thing you like about the school?

3. If you could change anything you do not like in the school what would it be?

Estudio Preliminar del Programa ESL/Bilingue

1	2	3	4
Fuertamente no estoy de acuerdo			**Fuertamente estoy de acuerdo**

En una escala de uno (Fuertamente no estoy de acuerdo) a cuatro (Fuertamente estoy de acuerdo), por favor indice su creencia con respecto a las siguientes declaraciónes. Escriban el número en el espacio enfrente dela declaraciónes y escriban cualquier comentario despúes dela declaración.

1. _____ Me enseñan lo que yo espero en las clases Bilingües que yo tomo.

   comentario:_____

2. _____ Yo entiendo la información que es enseñado en mi clase Bilingüe de Gobierno Civil.

   comentario:_____

3. _____ Yo entiendo la información que es enseñada en mi clase de Biologia Bilingüe.

   comentario:_____

4. _____ Yo entiendo la información que es enseñada en mi clase de Matematicas Bilingüe.

   comentario:_____

5. _____ Me enseñan lo que yo espero en la clase de ESL que yo tomo.

   comentario:_____

6. _____ Yo creo que la manera en que se enseñan Inglés en mi clase de ESL me ayuda a aprender Inglés rapidamente.

   comentario:_____

7. _____ Yo pienso que nosotros necessitamos más clases de conversación en Inglés y mas clases de lectura y escritura en Inglés.

   comentario: _____

8. _____ Nadie me ayudó aprender acerca de la escuela cuando yo primero entre en la escuela secudaria.

comentario:_____

9. _____ Acostumbrarse a la nueva escuela sería más fácil si alguien pudiera ayudarme aprender acerca de la nueva cultura y el nuevo ambiente.

comentario:_____

10. _____ Es necesario tener a alguien que nos ayude a identificar que carrera/camino/profesión sería mejor para nostoros.

comentario:_____

11. _____ Más información acerca de carrera/profesión es necesitada para ayudar planear para despues de la escuela secudaria.

comentario:_____

12. _____ Muchos estudiantes Bilingüe participan en actividades escolares despúes de la escuela.

comentario:_____

13. _____ Yo creo que necesitamos más actividades para los estudiantes Bilingüe para que ellos se sientan mas una parte de la comunidad.

comentario:_____

Por favor conteste las siguientes preguntas.

1.¿Hasta que grado estudió en su país?

2.¿Qué es lo más que le gusta de esta escuela?

3.¿Si tu pudieras cambiar algo que no te gusta en la escuela que cambiarias?

APPENDIX B

PRELIMINARY STAFF INTERVIEW

Preliminary Staff Interview

1. What is your role in working the ESL/Bilingual students?

2. What are some of you opinions and/or concerns regarding the following:

   a. Bilingual classes:

   b. ESL classes.

3. What would you suggest could be done to improve the educational programs for our Bilingual/ESL students?

APPENDIX C

FOLLOW-UP ESL/BILINGUAL SURVEY

FOLLOW-UP ESL/BILINGUAL SURVEY

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree	Not sure

On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), please indicate your belief with respect to the following statements. Write the number in the spaces provided and write any comments you have regarding the question in the space provided.

1. _____ I enjoyed my English Conversation class this year.

   comment: _____
   _____

2. _____ The new English conversation class provided me more opportunity to speak in English and learn the language quicker.

   comment: _____
   _____

3. _____ The ESL Language Lab study periods were helpful to me and provided me more opportunity to practice my English skills.

   comment: _____
   _____

4. _____ The counseling group sessions were helpful in teaching me about my new environment.

   comment: _____
   _____

5. _____ The counseling group sessions helped me better deal with difficulties I encountered in my new culture.

   comment: _____
   _____

6. _____ The counseling group sessions helped me identify what career path might be best for me to learn more about.

comment: _____
_____

7. _____ I have joined at least one extracurricular school activity this year.

comment: _____
_____

8. _____ No one helped me to learn about the school when I first came to the high school.

comment: _____
_____

9. _____ Adjusting to the new school was easier because of the group counseling sessions.

comment: _____
_____

Please answer the following questions:

1. What is the best thing you like about the school?

2. If you could change anything you do not like in the school what would it be?

Estudio del Programa

1	2	3	4	5
Fuertamente no estoy de acuerdo	No estoy de acuerdo	Estoy de acuerdo	Fuertamente estoy de acuerdo	No estoy seguro

En una escala de uno (Fuertamente no estoy de acuerdo) a cuatro (Fuertamente estoy de acuerdo), por favor indice su creencia con respecto a las siguientes declaraciones. Escriban el numero en el espacio enfrente dela declaraciones y escriban cualquier comentario despues dela declaracion.

1. _____ Yo disfruté mi clase de conversacion Inglés este ano.

   comentario:_____ _____

2. _____ La nueva clase de conversacion Ingles me proveyó mas oportunidad de hablar en Inglés y aprender la lengua más rapida.

   comentario:_____

3. _____ Las clases de ESL Lengue Lab eran útile y me proveyeron más oportunidad de practicar mis habilidades en Inglés.

   comentario:_____

4. _____ El aconsejando grupo era útile en ensenàdome sobre mi ambiente nuevo.

   comentario:_____

5. _____ El aconsejando grupo me ayudó con dificutades que yo encontré en mi nueva cultura.

   comentario:_____

6. _____ El aconsejando grupo me ayudó a identificar qué carrera/camino/profesión sería mejor para mi y para apprender más sobre.

   comentario:_____

7. _____ Yo participó en actividades escolares despues de la escuela este año.

comentario:_____

8._____ Nadie me ayudó aprender acerca de la escuela cuando yo primero entre en la escuela secudaria.

comentario:_____

9. _____ Acostumbrarse a la nueva escuela fue más facil porque el aconsejando grupo me ayudo aprender acerca de la nueva cultura y el nuevo ambiente.

comentario:_____

Por favor conteste las siguientes preguntas.

1. Qué es lo mas qué le gusta de esta escuela?

2. Si tu pudieras cambiar algo qué no te gusta en la escuela qué cambiarias?

APPENDIX D

FAMILY INTERVIEWS
ENGLISH AND SPANISH VERSIONS

DANBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Family Interview for Limited English Proficient New Students

Date of interview:_____

Student Information

Name of student:_____

Name of parent:_____

Name of school entering:_____

Previous school(s) attended (name[s] and address[es]):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Years of schooling completed:_____

Has student previously attended Danbury schools?_____

At previous residence, what was the most recent grade level of the student? _____

Has student repeated any grade levels?_____

Was student receiving any special education services? ____

Has student had any academic or other problems in school?___

What are the student's strengths?_____

_____

_____

What are the student's interests (other than sports)?

_____

_____

_____

In which sports does the student like to participate?

_____

_____

Has student studied English during previous schooling?_____If yes, how many years?_____

Family Information:

With whom is the student presently living? (Relationship, address, and phone)_____

_____

_____

_____

How many siblings does the student have?_____

What are their ages?_____

Father's type of work. (In native country)_____

Mother's type of work. (In native country)_____

Is parent/guardian currently working in this country?_____
If yes, where?_____

Significant Developmental Problems:

Were there any birth and/or childhood difficulties? ____ If so, what were they? _____

_____

Were there any medical difficulties?_____If so, what were they?_____

Were there any social/emotional difficulties?____ If so, what were they?_____

_____

Goals:

What are the parental goals for the student?_____

_____

What are the student's goals?_____

_____

Any concern parent may have about student entering new school?_____

_____

Interview conducted

by:_____

APPENDIX E

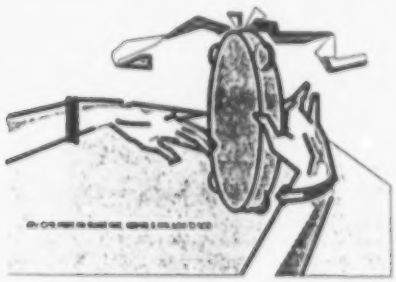
PARENT NIGHT FLYERS
ENGLISH AND SPANISH VERSIONS

NEW-COMER PARENT AND STUDENT NIGHT

DECEMBER 15, 1994
6:00 TO 9:00 PM
HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA

TOPICS THAT WE WILL DISCUSS:

*** SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**
***SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR PARENTS**
***SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY**
*** SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR GRADUATION**
***PLANNING FOR FUTURE PARENT/STUDENT MEETINGS**



_____

Can you bring a dish of your favorite food from your country? YES or NO

PLEASE WRITE WHAT YOU WILL BRING_____

Student Name:_____

Parent Name:_____

NOCHE DE PADRES Y ESTUDIANTES RECIENLLEGADOS

15 DE DICIEMBRE DEL 1994
DE LAS 6:00 HASTA LAS 9:00pm
CAFETERIA DE HIGH SCHOOL

TEMAS QUE SERAN DISCUTIDOS:

***ASISTENCIA EN LA ESCUELA**
***APOYO PARA LOS PADRES DE LA ESCUELA**
*** CODIGO DE DISCIPLINA**
***REQUISITOS PARA LA GRADUACION**
*** PLANIFICACION DE OTRAS REUNIONES DE PADRES Y ESTUDIANTES**

PUEDE USTED TRAER UN PLATO DE COMIDA? SI O NO

FAVOR DE ESCRIBIR LA COMIDA QUE PIENSA TRAER_____

NOMBRE DEL ESTUDIANTE_____

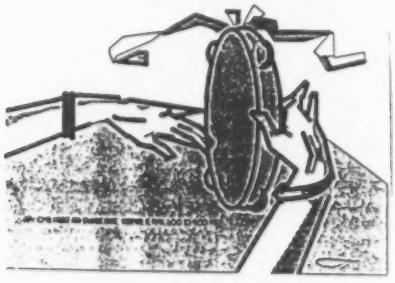
NOMBRE DEL PADRE_____

PARENT AND STUDENT NIGHT

APRIL 11, 1995
6:00 TO 9:00 PM
HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA

TOPICS THAT WE WILL DISCUSS:

*** INFORMATION ON CAREERS AND UNIVERSITIES FOR YOUR TEENAGERS**
*** SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR GRADUATION**
***PLANNING FOR FUTURE PARENT/STUDENT MEETINGS**



If you wish bring a dish of your favorite food from your country.

Student Name:_____

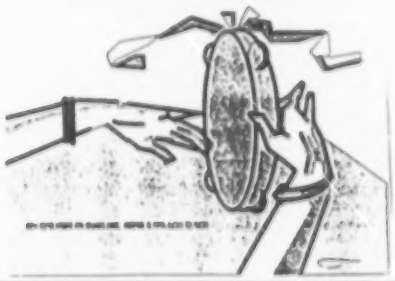
Parent Name:_____

NOCHE DE PADRES Y ESTUDIANTES

11 DE ABRIL DEL 1995
DE LAS 6:00 HASTA LAS 9:00pm
CAFETERIA DE HIGH SCHOOL

TEMAS QUE SERAN DISCUTIDOS:

*** INFORMACION SOBRE CARRERAS Y TIPOS DE UNIVERSIDADES PARA SUS HIJOS/HIJAS**
***REQUISITOS PARA LA GRADUACION**
*** PLANIFICACION DE OTRAS REUNIONES DE PADRES Y ESTUDIANTES**



_____SI, VOY A ASISTIR ____NO, VOY ASISTIR

NOMBRE DEL ESTUDIANTE_____

NOMBRE DEL PADRE_____

SI DESEA, PUEDE TRAER UN PLATO DE COMIDA

APPENDIX F

TEN MOST-ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
ENGLISH AND SPANISH VERSIONS

Answers to the Ten Most Asked Questions

1. What are the school hours?
   7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

2. How can I see my child's teachers.

   To make an appointment with the teachers, you call ___-____.

3. In an emergency, what can I do if I don't find the ESL counselor?

   In case of an emergency, call ___-____; otherwise you can leave a message on the counselor's answering machine.

4. What can I do if my child misses the school bus?

   It is the student's responsibility to get to the bus stop on time. If the student does not catch the bus, it is the student's and/or the parent's responsibility to get the student to school.

5. What do I do if my child is sick?

   If the student has a fever, the student should stay home. Parents must call the school to report that the child will be home sick. If the student does not have a fever, the student should come to school. If necessary, the student can see the school nurse.

6. Is it true that all students receive homework every night?

   In general, all teachers assign homework during the week, some teachers may not assign homework for the weekend. If your child does not have homework some nights, you should ask the child to practice English and/or review some the day's lessons. If your child is coming home regularly without homework, please call the school counselor.

7. How would I know if there is a school closing or a late opening due to a snow storm?

The local radio stations (800 AM, 98.3 FM, 91.7 FM) will announce school closings and late openings.

8. What do I do if my child has to leave school early?

   You must send a note to the school counselor stating the reason for the child's early release. If you forget to send a note, call ___-____.

9. How do I help my child get an after-school job?

   If your child is in the United States with a student visa, he/she is not allowed to work.

10. What do I do if my child is having problems with friends or at home?

    Please call the school counselor. If the school counselor can't help you, he/she will give you the names of others who might be of assistance.

Diez Pregutas de Interes Sobre HS

1. Cuales son las horas escolares? de 7:30 am. hasta 1:55 pm.

2. Como hago para ver a los profesores de mi hijo/a? Es muy importante que llame al ___-____ para hacer una cita, lla que los profesores estan dando clases la mayor parte del dia. La Consejera le hara una cita con el professor.

3. Que hago si la consejera no se encuentra? Deje un mensaje con la maquina. En caso de emergencia, llame a la secretaria al ___-____.

4. Que hago si el autobus deja a mi hijo/a a pie? Es la responsabilidad de el alumno llegar a tiempo a la parada de la casa y de la escuela. Si, por alguna razon, el autobus deja el estudiante a pie, es la responsabilidad del alumno y el padre llevar el estudiante a la escuela.

5. Que hago si mi hijo/a dice que esta enfermo/a? Almenos que el estudiante tenga fievre, el estudiante debe venir a la escuela. Si es necesario, la Consejera llevara el estudiante a la enfermeria. En caso que el estudiante tenga fievre y no venga a la escuela, tiene que mandarle una carta de escusa a la Consejera el proximo dia.

6. Es verdad que todo estudiante tiene tarea por las noches? Por lo general, cada estudiante debe recibir tarea todas las noches, menos viernes. Si este no es el caso, el estudiante debe estudiar ingles y el trabajo que hizo en el salon ese dia. Si usted encuentra que el estudiante llega a la casa en muchas ocasiones sin tarea, debe llamar a la Consejera.

7. Como se sabe si habra una tardanza o si la escuela estara cerrada? Debe poner la radio en las siguientes emisoras: 800 AM, 98.3 FM, y 91.7 FM. Tambien pueden obtener esta informacion de las noticias locales en la television. Nota: Si hay tardanza, por este ano, sera de 90 minutos.

8. Que hago si mi hijo/a tiene que irse de la escuela temprano? Debe mandar una carta dando la razon a la Consejera. Si se le olvida, llame a la Consejera al ___-_____ para darle la razon por telefono.

9. Como hago para ayudar a mi hijo/a obtener un trabajo despues de la escuela? Si su hijo/a esta en este pais con Visa de Estudiante, el gobierno no da autorizacion de trabajo.

10. Que hago si encuentro que mi hijo/a parece que tiene problemas con amistades o en el hogar? Llame a la Consejera para darle informacion sobre el problema. Ella le ayudara o le puede encontrar quien le ayude.

APPENDIX G

PARENT NIGHT EVALUATION
SPANISH AND ENGLISH VERSIONS

PARENT NIGHT EVALUATION

1. Do you think that the information you received tonight helped you to understand how the school functions?

2. Do you feel after tonight's activity that you would feel comfortable visiting the school?

3. Would you like to attend another parent night meeting?

4. Have you met other parents this evening that may serve as a support for you, since you are all new to this country and are having similar experiences?

5. Please write any topics you would like to discuss in future meetings.

Noche de Padres y Estudiantes Recienllegados

Evaluacion de Padres

1. Piensa usted que la informacion que recibio esta noche le pueda ayudar entender como funciona la escuela?

2. Piensa usted que despues de la actividad de esta noche se sentira bien visitando la escuela?

3. Piensa usted que le gustaria asistir otra reunion de padres como la de esta noche?

4. Piensa usted que ha conosido a otro padre/madre esta noche en el cual reciba apoyo lla que ambos son nuevos a este pais y estan pasando por experiencias semejantes?

5. Favor de escribir los temas que a usted le gustaria cubrir en futuras reuniones: